

# We Are All Going to Die

**An open letter and anti-manifesto to Climate Offensive, Extinction Rebellion, Earth Strike, and other nonviolent movements**

Black Oak Clique

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When the world ends, people come out of their apartments and meet their neighbors for the first time; they share food, stories, companionship. No one has to go to work or the laundromat; nobody remembers to check the mirror or scale or email account before leaving the house. Graffiti artists surge into the streets; strangers embrace, sobbing and laughing. Every moment possesses an immediacy formerly spread out across months. Burdens fall away, people confess secrets and grant forgiveness, the stars come out over New York City...and nine months later, a new generation is born.

*CrimethInc. Collective*

## We're going to die?

*The Earth is not dying, it is being killed, and those who are killing it have names and addresses.<sup>1</sup>* But us – me, you, even those who are killing the earth? We're going to die.

In the worst case scenario, you drown, you starve, or you succumb to heat stroke. Not figuratively. You will drown, you will starve, you will succumb to heat stroke. Perhaps there's the small chance that you will survive the mass migration to the last reaches of habitable land in and around the poles.

Perhaps.

But let's be realistic here: In all likelihood, you're going to die. A slow, horrible, excruciating death at that. We would like to say this is the future we're hurtling towards at an ever-increasing rate. But it isn't: it's the present, the material, graspable present. Islands are sinking into the ocean. The poverty-stricken are freezing to death on the streets. People are burning to death in gigantic wildfires.

The collapse is not to be a single event. It's a process, and it's currently underway.

In the best case scenario, death is liberation. Perhaps the real "you" – your body, your consciousness, your soul, what have you – won't die, *per se*: instead, the abstract "you" – your way of life, your social relationships under capitalism, your system of meaning that's been drilled into your head since day one – will die.

## Can't we reform the system?

No. We can't. The system is the problem, and the system runs deep. The problem isn't just capitalism. It's also the state, but it also isn't *just* the state. It's the ideology of consumption itself: that beings – plants, animals (including humans deemed to be \*sub\*human), fungi, even inanimate natural "resources" – are objects to be bought, sold, and eventually, consumed. This ideology is perhaps the deepest ideology we have. It permeates every form of knowledge: from science, to art, to politics. It seeps through our language (one must think how often we refer to feeling, living beings – ones with the capacity to suffer – as "it.") It permeates our relationships. It is the very basis of our societies, if it cannot be deemed our "society" itself – the group of capital-h Humans deemed to be worthy enough to be circumscribed by the abstract Community, that constructs itself in opposition to literally everything else.

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<sup>1</sup> A famous quote from Utah Phillips

Your favorite pet politician isn't immune to this. Not Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, not Bernie Sanders, not Jill Stein. Not the Democratic Socialists, not the Green Party, not the CPUSA, and not anyone else, either.

Perhaps their hearts are in the right place – but sadly, that isn't enough.

To quote the amazing piece *Anarchy Works* by Peter Gelderloos:

Some people oppose capitalism on environmental grounds, but think some sort of state is necessary to prevent ecocide. But the state is itself a tool for the exploitation of nature. Socialist states such as the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China have been among the most ecocidal regimes imaginable. That these two societies never escaped the dynamics of capitalism is itself a feature of the state structure – it necessitates hierarchical, exploitative economic relationships of control and command, and once you start playing that game nothing beats capitalism.

## What about nonviolence?

Concerning nonviolence: it is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks.

*Malcolm X*

The struggle against ecocide was never nonviolent, and it never will be, because it cannot be. That's because ecocide is violence: violence against me and you, against animals (wild and domestic,) against the trees and the grass and the water and the mountains.

*Climate insurrection is self-defense.*

Strict adherence to nonviolence – that is, the rejection of violence – is complicity in the face of ecological destruction. It is not “offensive,” it is not “rebellion,” and it’s not a “strike” at climate change.

Many of us do not have the privilege of being nonviolent – namely, those of us who already marginalized. We will be the first to go. We're the rural farm workers and their families being sprayed with pesticides. We're the houseless freezing to death in polar vortices. We're the indigenous peoples whose homes are being swallowed by the sea. We're the poor who will not have the capital necessary to complete the long trek north to the last remaining habitable lands.

If we aren't violent – if we don't rebel against the system that oppresses us – we will be crushed. Don't be complicit in our death, in your death.

## What's climate insurrection?

Perhaps the only hope me or you have. It's destroying that which destroys us – by any means possible.

## Wouldn't that hurt the movement?

No. A better question would be: what has “nonviolent” protest won us in the long run? The answer: absolutely nothing. Many supposedly “nonviolent” movements, such as the Civil Rights

Movement, were incredibly violent. There were hundreds of riots throughout the United States, and of course, the existence of armed paramilitary groups such as the Black Panthers, or the Brown Berets. One could make the argument that this narrative of nonviolence is pushed by the very people whose power would be threatened by violence, because violence means (perhaps immediate) change. Hence: why those in the US celebrate Martin Luther King Day, a federally recognized holiday; but not Malcolm X Day.

Even the most-oft example of nonviolent resistance, the Indian independence movement, was not so. Bhagat Singh, who after his execution became a folk hero of the cause, was inspired by French anarchist Auguste Vaillant to bomb the British Raj's Central Legislative Assembly. Less than a year before, he had assassinated a British police officer in retaliation for the death of the nationalist leader Lala Lajpat Rai.

## **Wouldn't it be counterproductive?**

Counterproductive to what? Getting meaningless reforms passed? Getting empty pyrrhic victories in the legal circuit? Performing impotent marches through major cities that don't achieve anything other than receiving lukewarm press from second-rate newspapers?

Ask the battery hen liberated from cramped cages by animal activists, or the old-growth forest protected indefinitely by logging saboteurs (and all the animals who call those forest home): is direct action productive?

Anarchist action — patient, hidden, tenacious, involving individuals, eating away at institutions like a worm eats away at fruit, as termites undermine majestic trees — such action does not lend itself to the theatrical effects of those who wish to draw attention to themselves.

*Anonymous (in Desert)*

To quote the great illusionist Georges Méliès, “I must say, to my great regret, the cheapest tricks have the greatest impact.”

## **If insurrection is so great, how come people aren't doing it now?**

They are. You just haven't heard of it because the media is smart enough to hide it. Hearing about the heroic stories of those who fight back would be too dangerous for most to hear — it runs the risk of radicalizing them. Movements like the Animal and Earth Liberation Fronts, have been waging war against ecocide since the 1970s.

## **I don't want to go to prison.**

We dream of a world without prisons.

## **I'm scared.**

We're scared too, friend. We should be, but we should be strong, too.

## **What can we do?**

We'll let the great animal activist Keith Mann speak for us.

Labs raided, locks glued, products spiked, depots ransacked, windows smashed, construction halted, mink set free, fences torn down, cabs burnt out, offices in flames, car tires slashed, cages emptied, phone lines severed, slogans daubed, muck spread, damage done, electrics cut, site flooded, hunt dogs stolen, fur coats slashed, buildings destroyed, foxes freed, kennels attacked, businesses burgled, uproar, anger, outrage, balaclava clad thugs.

## **What if I don't have the ability to fight?**

You do, even if you can't physically. Despite the tone of this letter, we aren't totally opposed to above-ground action. In fact, in some cases, we think it's necessary.

Groups like the Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Group and the Animal Liberation Front Supporters Group are active in representing and advocating for operatives. As Sinn Féin, the Irish political party once associated with the militant IRA has been described:

Both Sinn Féin and the IRA play different but converging roles in the war of national liberation. The Irish Republican Army wages an armed campaign... Sinn Féin maintains the propaganda war and is the public and political voice of the movement.

## **What happens next?**

We don't know. But with any luck, we've laid out our options.

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